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Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for August 8th, 2014

To see what we've added to the Electric Scotland site view our What's New page at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/whatsnew.htm>

To see what we've added to the Electric Canadian site view our What's New page at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/whatsnew.htm>

For the latest news from Scotland see our ScotNews feed at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/>

Electric Scotland News

A video version of this newsletter can be viewed at <http://youtu.be/n7yEJ4P5xFO>

Bagpipers concern over potential travel ban

BAGPIPERS have expressed their fear over a new law which led to two US teenagers having their pipes seized by border control staff at the weekend.

Campbell Webster, 17 and Eryk Bean, 17, both from New Hampshire had their pipes seized while travelling between Canada and the US, just two days before they were due to fly to Scotland for the World Pipe Band Championships.

Mr Webster's pipes, which were previously used by his father in his role as an official piper to the Queen, were confiscated by officials because they are made out of ivory.

New laws brought in earlier this year mean that owners of pipes containing ivory must get a Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) certificate from the US Fish and Wildlife Service in order to transport their pipes across borders.

And pipers hoping to travel to Scotland for the competition will have to make an appointment with officials at a "designated" port and make a declaration on their customs form.

But pipers say the confusing rules, brought in at the end of June, are causing "significant concern" - with many unsure how the new laws work.

The full article can be read at:

<http://www.scotsman.com/lifestyle/heritage/bagpipers-concern-over-potential-travel-ban-1-3500955>

Scottish Referendum

It's now near the time for the big referendum vote. I was debating whether to do regular weekly posts leading up to it but as it's not my role to try and sway folk either way I discarded that idea.

I do know that many people have questions about it that they still haven't found answers to. Given I've been covering this debate through our section on "Scottish Independence and Scotland's Future" at <http://www.electricscotland.com/independence/index.htm> there is much to read there that might help you decide.

This is not a political vote in that if you get it wrong you can repair that with a vote in the next election. This vote is thus for our children and our children's children which makes it very important that you be as informed as possible before making your vote.

Things that get me concerned is the lack of reporting in the main stream press of what is going on throughout Scotland. For example, I get told of people that are giving great speeches but I've never heard of them and nor have I heard their speeches. Likewise I'm told

that the Radicals in Scotland are doing great work at local meetings but are they Radical Left or Radical Right? They don't tell you.

Then any time an "expert" comes out with a comment on something you can be assured that there will be another "expert" with an opposing point of view.

Tom Hunter and his group has published an ebook asking 16 questions about Independence and it is worth a read. You can get to it at:

<http://www.futureukandscotland.ac.uk/papers/scotlands-decision-16-questions-think-about-referendum-18-september>

However that book is like all others not fully complete. I read the questions on International affairs and noted there is no mention of the alternative EFTA/EEA possibility as an alternative to EU membership. And when it comes to diplomatic missions they only talk about countries whereas its missions to International organisations such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO) that are likely to be more important yet no mention of these at all.

And of course there is the fact that over 70% of our exports are to the rUK with the USA being the next largest market. In 2010, over 12 million domestic tourists took overnight trips to Scotland and the annual expenditure was about £2.6 billion. Domestic visits account for 84% of all tourism visits to Scotland whilst expenditure by UK visitors accounts for 64% of all tourism expenditure to Scotland.

That means that the rUK is by far our largest market for tourism and exports and so we need to consider what a vote for Independence will do to those vital markets. We know there is some anti-English sentiment by some Scots so why won't there also be some anti-Scottish feeling in England by some English folks if we vote for Independence?

None of this means we can't be a successful Independent country but of course we are currently dependent on the SNP to guide us through this and to be totally honest with you I find that single fact to be the most worrying of all. The SNP have shown little or no vision for the country other than to hang onto the pound and thus be ruled by the Bank of England and immediately give away a good chunk of the hard earned independence to Brussels which will prevent us being at the top table of important world organisations. They have ruled out a referendum on joining the EU which is the same EU that cost Scotland some 100,000 or so jobs in our fishing industry and devastated some of our rural communities with a loss of some £2 billion in annual revenue as a result.

You can be against the SNP but still vote for Independence but then you have to decide if the battles after independence will be worth it and I have to say many people say it will be.

So the decision is yours to make, those that have the vote anyway, so I wish you all the best on getting it right on the day and all the best for what comes after.

And while I see this as my last word on the referendum in here prior to the vote that doesn't mean I won't post an article or paper in our Scotland's Future section if I deem it important.

The debate between Alex Salmond and Alistair Darling can be viewed at:

<http://player.stv.tv/programmes/salmond-darling/>

Petition to the Queen

This is another paper from the Scotland-UN Committee which adds to our knowledge on how we got to our devolved government. You can read this at <http://www.electricscotland.com/independence/queen.pdf>

Violinist Nicola Benedetti

She has launched a new CD exploring her Celtic roots in an album combining classical and traditional music. One of the tracks was performed by her at the Commonwealth Games.

Learn more from her site at <http://www.nicolabenedetti.co.uk>

Site not available

We were getting : Bad Request HTTP Error 400. The request is badly formed. Also I spotted another about background App not able to serve up request fast enough, etc.

Both these errors have to do with DNS issues that are now controlled by Ezoic. I have emailed them but at time of writing this they have not got back to me. The UK office has left for the day and the US office just says no-one is available to take your call.

When you try out a new system you can expect problems but you do expect them to be resolved in a timely manner and of course in this situation I realise I have no support number to call and just an email address. As my normal contact is in the UK that's an issue as they'd already left for the day when I first noticed this problem. I phoned the Californian office where they should have been available only to be told to leave a message which I did.

I will give it another hour or so and then if still no contact all we can do is take back our DNS under our own control yet again and ensure when we give it back we have a phone number for someone we can contact in an emergency.

So sorry for the problems... and there is likely to be a delay in getting out this newsletter as a result.

Electric Canadian

Duck Lake

Stories from the Canadian Backwoods By E. Ryerson Young.

Have continued to work on the story about Chubb and now up to chapter XIII which starts...

JENNIE, for once in her life, was in the midst of quietness, plenty, and kindness; but her little heart beat for her brother, and for fear lest her father would carry out his threat to shoot the teacher. She quickly saw that her good friend, Mrs. Miller, refused to believe her, and so she determined to leave this home as she had left her own. But Jennie, however, did not reckon with her hostess. A dog and Mrs. Miller were too many for her, and she was caught in the act of running away.

Mrs. Miller quickly put Jennie back into her bed, and warned her not to leave it until she gave her permission. As a precaution, the good woman carried most of Jennie's garments away with her.

The next day the teacher came home, and was soon told of the little one's presence. Hastening to Jennie's side, he was greeted with exclamations of delight. Jennie soon found him quite sympathetic with her view of things, and she eagerly poured out her little heart to him.

The following morning the teacher asked Mrs. Miller for Jennie's clothes, and for things to complete an outfit.

'You're not going to take her back to those cruel people, Mr. Green? Just think, the dearie's back is full of black welts. They're brutes over there, to beat a child so.'

'It is not my intention,' said the teacher, quietly, thoroughly sympathizing with the good woman's indignation, 'to take her home just yet.'

You can read these at: <http://www.electriccanadian.com/pioneering/ducklake/index.htm>

Early Scottish Influence in North America

By Farquhar Stuart MacLennan (pdf)

John Henderson found this wee book and sent me a copy for the site. As I understand it this was a talk given by the author in Montreal and you can download it at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/Scotland/index.htm>

The Flag in the Wind

This weeks issue was compiled by Clare Adamson where she is giving her own reflections on the fight for Independence. There is also a Synopsis this week.

You can read this issue at <http://www.scotsindependent.org>

Electric Scotland

Thomas Dick Lauder

Hope you are enjoying his book, Lochandhu. Started on the final Volume 3 and you can find these at the foot of the page at: http://www.electricscotland.com/history/other/lauder_thomas1.htm where we've added chapters IX & X this week.

Alan Cunningham

This distinguished poet entered the world under those lowly circumstances, and was educated under those disadvantages, which have so signally characterized the history of the best of our Scottish bards.

Now started on Volume 3 and have added Pages 157 to 231.

You can read these at <http://www.electricscotland.com/music/cunningham/index.htm>

The Northern Highlands in the Nineteenth Century

Some years ago I published the 2 volumes in this set. Well I have now found a third volume is now available and so have started to work on this.

Added the issue for 1855...

When the year 1855 opened, the country was greatly perturbed by the reports which were coming to hand of the condition of the British Army in the Crimea, exposed, as it was to a severe winter without sufficient clothing or protection. In the House of Commons on 25th January Mr Roebuck gave notice of his intention to move for a Committee of Inquiry. Lord John Russell wrote to the Prime Minister saying that he did not see how this motion could be resisted, and tendering his resignation. This step paralyzed the Government, and on a division Mr Roebuck's motion was carried by a majority of 157. Thereupon Lord Aberdeen resigned, and after Lord John Russell and Lord Derby had each failed to form an administration, Lord Palmerston was called to the head of affairs. But the difficulty was not at an end. The new Prime Minister accepted the motion for an inquiry, while substituting a new Committee. Mr Gladstone, Sir James Graham, and Mr Sidney Herbert were opposed to an inquiry, and persisted in resigning. Sir Comewall Lewis succeeded Mr Gladstone as Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Lord John Russell returned to the Government as Colonial Minister in place of Mr Sidney Herbert. Lord Panmure (Fox Maule) combined in his own person the hitherto distinct functions of Secretary at War and Secretary for War.

Another dispute soon arose. A European Conference took place at Vienna, to which Lord John Russell had been accredited. On his return Lord John strongly condemned in the Commons the proposals made at Vienna. Thereupon the Austrian Plenipotentiary declared that at Vienna Lord John had approved of these very proposals. This Lord John admitted, but said he had since changed his opinion. Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton gave notice of a motion of want of confidence in Lord John, and the latter withdrew from the Ministry.

In March the Czar Nicholas died, and in June Lord Raglan, Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in the Crimea, also passed away. He was succeeded by General Simpson. The south side of Sebastopol fell in September. This practically put an end to the war, but our soldiers were obliged to spend another winter in the neighbourhood of Sebastopol. They were, however, comfortably clad and housed in wooden huts. Negotiations for peace continued during the rest of the year.

In August the Inverness Suspension Bridge was opened for traffic, and in November the railway was opened from Inverness to Nairn.

You can read this issue (No. 14) at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/highlands/3no14.htm>

Henry Dryerre

Composer, Poet, Journalist and Musician.

Now added another three Worthies...

Niel Gow

Dundonachie

History of the Dunkeld Bridge Question

You can read these at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/poetry/dryerre/index.htm>

Poets and Poetry of Scotland from the earliest to the present time

Comprising characteristic selections from the works of more noteworthy Scottish poets with biographical and critical notices. By James Grant Wilson (1876)

Now on Volume 2 with...

Pages 378 - 476 added this week.

You can read these at <http://www.electricscotland.com/poetry/poets/>

Samuel Smiles

Newspaper Editor, Author and Social reformer has been added to our Significant Scots page.

This is another biography we're adding. I've added this week...

Chapter XXI - Visit to Italy

Chapter XXII - Growing Old
Chapter XXIII - Appreciation from Foreigners
Chapter XXIV - Translations - Royat - Italy
Index

And this now completes this book.

You can read this book at http://www.electricscotland.com/history/other/smiles_samuel.htm

Book of the Old Edinburgh Club

We have acquired copies of 12 volumes of this club's publications and we're going to add one a week.

Now added volume 11 which includes...

Map of Edinburgh in the Mid-Eighteenth Century By Henry F. Kerr With map.
The Old Tolbooth: Extracts from the Original Records By John A. Fairley.
Shelley in Edinburgh By Walter Edwin Peck (M.A., Columbia) With illustrations.
On the Antecedents of the College of Justice By R. K. Hannay.
The Tailors' Hall, Cowgate By Thomas Ross With illustrations by G. Baldwin Brown and W. Forbes Gray

You can read these at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/edinburgh/edinburghclub>

Enigma Machine

Now have up puzzle 73.

You can get to this one at <http://www.electricensecanadian.com/lifestyle/enigma/enigma073.htm>

The Great Floods of August 1829

In the Province of Moray and Adjoining Districts by Sir Thomas Dick Lauder.

This week added...

Chapter IX. Continuation of the Occurrences on the Left Bank of the River Findhorn, below the Counternose.
Chapter X. & XI. The Plain of Forres on the Right Bank of the Findhorn, to the Sea-Port of that Name - The Altyre Burn.

You can read this at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/moray/floodsndx.htm>

The History of the "Old Scots" Church of Freehold

From the Scotch immigration of 1685 till the removal of the Church.

Now added the final chapters which you can read at

<http://www.electricscotland.com/history/america/freehold/index.htm>

Robert Dick of Thurso

Geologist and Botanist by Samuel Smiles LL.D. (1879).

we're now up to Chapter XII of this book.

In chapter XI we read...

Robert Dick, by dint of continuous industry, was gradually acquiring a notion of Caithness geology. His knowledge was for the most part derived from direct personal observation. He never accepted a statement without having verified it himself. He saw with no man's eyes but his own; he thought with no man's brains but his own. Thus what he did know was thoroughly exact, accurate, and reliable.

As you proceed from letter to letter, in his communications with Hugh Miller, you see him unlearning his old views and learning new ones. Every ramble throws some new light on the geology of Caithness. He notes down everything that he sees. About the dip of Caithness rocks, his observations are for the most part at variance with the views of his "superiors," his "masters in geology." Nevertheless, he notes down his own facts, and no doubt they will by and by be confirmed and adopted.

He was very cautious in adopting conclusions. He must first be quite sure of the premises. He found many writers on geology starting with a theory and then making the so-called facts fit into the theory. "Here has been some one writing upon the geology of Caithness," he said. "His writing is very good, but his premises are incorrect. He cannot have seen the rocks, except from a gig, when he passed

along the road; and now he drags them in to elucidate his theory. When I want to know what a rock is, I go to it. I hammer it; I dissect it. I then know what it really is. I object to this eternal theorising. My idea is that we know very little of geology, yet these men have got it dignified by the name of a science. The science of geology! Why, don't they see that there are only a very few exposed rocks which we can study. It is only a small bit of the crust of the earth that we can inspect. What are the rocks that we can see, compared with the immense mass lying underground, or forming the ocean bed, which we can never see? No, no; we must just work patiently on, collect facts, and in course of time geology may develop into a science."

You can read this book at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/dick/index.htm>

The Home Life of Sir David Brewster

Scottish physicist, mathematician, astronomer, inventor, writer, historian of science and university principal. A new book we're starting.

PREFACE TO THIRD EDITION

It has been a great pleasure to prepare an edition of "Sir David Brewster's Home Life" in a cheap, but not abbreviated form, at the time when his Centenary is about to be celebrated.

The request for this edition was a peculiar pleasure and interest to me, for it came from the "Borderers' Association," as representative of those lovely Border lands my father loved so well, and where a hundred years ago he first saw that Light, the mysteries of which he delighted throughout his long life to investigate.

M. M. GORDON.

Parkhill, Aug. 24, 1851.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

In placing before the public the following notes of my father's life, taken from a home point of view, I am too well aware of the unfavourable criticisms which I almost necessarily incur. I have persevered in the face of many difficulties, however, because a strong wish is known to exist among the unscientific (for whom alone I write) to have a more familiar and accessible record of a useful and brilliant career, than can be expected from the scientific memoirs of Sir David Brewster, which, it is hoped, may soon be undertaken by competent writers. I have not called in his numerous letters, and have principally made use of my own materials, and of what has been placed at my disposal.

The kindness of my father's distinguished colleague, Professor Tait, in revising the allusions to science, which have necessarily occurred, secures correctness in this part of my volume. To the other kind friends whose notes appear in the work, or who have gathered information for me, I beg also to return my cordial thanks.

You can get to this book at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/brewster/index.htm>

Memorandum to the Council of Europe 1980

Another historical document from the Scotland-UN committee.

You can read this at <http://www.electricscotland.com/independence/scotlandun.htm>

Journal of a Soldier

Of the Seventy-First Glasgow Regiment, Highland Light Infantry, from 1806 to 1815.

The Publishers have taken pains to ascertain the accuracy of the statements in the following Journal, and the result has confirmed them in the belief, that the Writer of it has related nothing but what passed under his own observation. His education sufficiently accounts for his expressing himself better than could have been expected from a private soldier. No alteration has been made upon his language, farther than the correction of a few of the more obvious verbal inaccuracies, Edinburgh, 29th March, 1819.

You can read this at http://www.electricscotland.com/history/scotreg/journal_soldier.htm

The Picts

A few days ago I created a page to point to antiquarian books about the Picts. To this page I've now also added three books about the Druids.

You can get to this page at <http://www.electricscotland.com/books/pdf/picts/index.htm>

Calendar Of Documents Relating to Scotland

By Joseph Bain. We have long been missing Volume 1 of this set but now found a copy and adding it to the site.

You can get to this at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/records/bain/>

Book of the Feill

This is a book in both English and Gaelic which was produced to raise money for the comfort of Highland Soldiers fighting in WWI.

Link to this pdf book can be found at the foot of the page at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/history/articles> which as it happens is No. 400 of our historic articles.

Old Pictures of Orkney

Found a wee book of old black and white pictures of Orkney which have added to the foot of the page at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/history/orkney/>

Gaelic Songs of Mary MacLeod

Includes translations of the Gaelic into English

Preface

The scarcity of published Gaelic literature, which is one of the chief factors adversely affecting the spoken language, is strikingly illustrated by the fact that the present book is not only the first edition but even the first complete collection of the surviving songs of the poetess of Harris and Skye. She is probably the best of our minor Gaelic bards, and she has been dead for two centuries and a quarter; yet her songs have remained scattered in various scarce books, and only four of them have hitherto been edited. How much of her works is lost to us we can only guess; this book contains all that is known to survive.

Circumstances have constrained me to try to meet three needs, the needs of the Gaelic reader, of the English reader, and of the schools. In special regard to the first and last, it may be said that the text has been formed on principles stated elsewhere, that the spelling conforms to correct modern standards, and that the apostrophe has been kept strictly in control. A vocabulary is given, and the few points of language that seemed to need discussion have received it. The Introduction contains what I have been able to gather about the life of the poetess, along with some literary matter which is meant to amplify what is said about Mary MacLeod in the introduction to *Bardachd Ghaidhlig*.

As regards the translation, the text is perhaps hard enough to justify a literal rendering, and such a rendering is necessarily in prose; but in any case I am convinced that, to convey what is communicable of the spirit of the original, prose is preferable to verse, and that the best English is the simplest. I hope that the English reader will at least gather what Mary is singing about, and that, if he abandons any previous misconceptions about Celtic gloom and mysticism, he will perceive that the original is simple and direct, though he cannot hear its melody or appreciate its sincere emotion.

My grateful thanks are due to all who have helped me in this little work; to Miss Heloi'se Russell-Fergusson, at whose suggestion it was undertaken; to the Librarian of the National Library of Scotland, and to the Librarian of Glasgow University for access to manuscripts in their charge; to Mr. Alexander Nicolson, Glasgow, who generously lent me, before its publication, his paper on Mary MacLeod read before the Gaelic Society of Glasgow, so that I could compare my results with his, and who was ever ready to aid me in other ways; to Mr. Roderick Martin of Obbe, Harris, and to Mr. Iain MacLeod of Bernera, Harris, who gave me their local tradition; to the Rev. A. E. Robertson (a descendant of Sir Norman MacLeod of Bernera), for the photograph which forms the frontispiece; and to Mr. Angus Matheson, who in reading the entire proof made many valuable suggestions. Above all, I am indebted to my father, Professor Watson, for the wisest of counsel and the best of help. I need not say that none of these shares my responsibility for the book's defects.

Is e m'aon mhiann gum bi an leabhran so mar chloich air chann ban-bhaird nan eilean, agus a chum maith Gaidhlig na h-Albann.

J. C. W.

Edinburgh,

April, 1934.

You can to this at http://www.electricscotland.com/poetry/mary_macleod.htm

Doctor Brown

Found this article about him in a copy of the North British Review which you can read at:

http://www.electricscotland.com/history/articles/dr_brown.htm

And Finally...

SCOTCH WASHING

I shall take notice of one thing more, which is commonly to be seen by the sides of the river, and that is, young women with their coats tucked up, stamping, in tubs, upon linen by way of washing; and this not only in summer, but in the hardest frosty weather, when their legs and feet are almost literally as red as blood with the cold; and often two of these wenches stamp in one tub, supporting themselves by their arms thrown over each other's shoulders. - Burt.

I might add that the same scene is recorded in the book by Campbell of his wanderings in Canada looking for the early Scots that had settled there. he came across this exact scene while snow was falling as he entered a small Scottish community in Canada.

A STRANGER IN THE COURT OF SESSION

The "Daft Highland Laird," a noted character in Edinburgh at the latter end of last century, one day accosted the Hon. Henry Erskine as he was entering the Parliament House. Erskine inquired of the "laird" how he did. "Oh, very well!" answered the laird; "but I'll tell ye what, Harry, tak in Justice wi' ye," pointing to one of the statues over the old porch of the House; "for she has stood lang i' the outside, and it would be a treat to see her inside, like other strangers!"

WHISKY IN HEAVEN

A clergyman was administering consolation to a dying Highlander, when he was shocked by the patient asking him if there "was any whisky in heaven?" Half apologetically he added, "Ye ken, sir, it's no that I care for it, but it looks weel on the table."

AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE

Lord Kames, returning from the north circuit to Perth, happened one night to sleep at Dunkeld. The next morning, walking towards the ferry, but apprehending he had missed his way, he asked a man whom he met to conduct him. The other answered with much cordiality-"That I will do, with all my heart, my lord. Does not your lordship remember me? My name's John --; I have had the honour to be before your lordship for stealing sheep." "Oh, John, I remember you well; and how is your wife? She had the honour to be before me, too, for receiving them, knowing them to be stolen." "At your lord ship's service. We were very lucky, we got off for want of evidence; and I am still going on in the bntcher trade." "Then," replied his lordship, "we may have the honour of meeting again!"

And that's it for this week and hope you all enjoy your weekend.

Alastair